



LOURDES A. LEON GUERRERO
GOVERNOR, MAGA'HAGA'

JOSHUA F. TENORIO
LT. GOVERNOR, SIGUNDO MAGA'LÁHI

GOVERNMENT OF GUAM

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
DIPATTAMENTON SALUT PUPBLEKO YAN SETBISION SUSIAT



LINDA UNPINGCO DENORCEY, MPH
DIRECTOR

LAURENT SF DUENAS, MPH, BSN, RN
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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CONFIRMED IMPORTED DENGUE CASE ON GUAM MOSQUITO BREEDING SITES / HABITAT SOURCE REDUCTION

The Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS) has been notified of one confirmed case of imported dengue fever on Guam. Dengue fever is a disease caused by any one of four closely related dengue viruses (DENV 1, DENV 2, DENV 3, or DENV 4). The viruses are transmitted to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito. *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is the primary transmitter, or vector, of dengue viruses, and fortunately this particular mosquito is not found on Guam. However, the Asian tiger mosquito, *Aedes albopictus*, which is another competent vector of dengue virus does exist on island. As a result, the public is urged to remain vigilant in preventing the transmission of the disease and eliminating mosquito breeding sites.

DPHSS notes that there are several outbreaks of dengue fever in the Pacific region, including the Republic of Palau with more than 150 cases, and the Philippines with more than 56,000 cases and 227 deaths: <http://outbreaknewstoday.com/philippines-reports-56k-dengue-fever-cases-q1-2019/>. While there is no vaccine for dengue fever, people traveling to the Philippines or Palau should be vigilant about taking precautions and preventing mosquito bites.

The principal symptoms of dengue fever are high fever, severe headache, severe pain behind the eyes, joint pain, muscle and bone pain, rash, and mild bleeding usually around nose or gums. Generally, younger children and those with their first dengue infection have a milder illness than older children and adults. Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever (DHF), the severe form of the disease, is characterized by a fever that lasts from 2 to 7 days, which can be followed by persistent vomiting, severe abdominal pain, and difficulty breathing. In addition, patients with DHF tend to bruise easily or other skin hemorrhages and possibly even internal bleeding.

The best preventive measure for residents living in areas infested with mosquitoes is to eliminate the places where the mosquito lays its eggs, which are primarily artificial containers that hold water. Mosquito larvae only need a little bit of standing water to survive. The Department wants to remind residents that breaking the mosquito life cycle starts at the home.

The Department asks residents to do their part to reduce the mosquito population with some simple steps:

- Properly cover or discard and dispose all containers that collect rainwater or water, such as flower pots, garbage cans, recycling containers, wheelbarrows, aluminum cans, boat tarps, old tires and buckets.
- Flush birdbaths and wading pools weekly.
- Flush ornamental bromeliads with water, or treat with BTI, which is a biological larvicide available at most home stores.



- Clean roof gutters, which can become clogged and hold water.
- Change the water in outdoor pet dishes regularly.
- Keep pools and spas chlorinated and filtered.
- Stock ornamental ponds with mosquito-eating fish.
- Cover rain barrels with screening.
- Check for standing water under houses, near plumbing drains, under air conditioner drip areas, around septic tanks, and water pumps.
- Take steps to eliminate standing water, improve drainage, and prevent future puddling.

It's important for residents to remember the four D's of mosquito prevention:

1. **Drain:** Empty out water containers and scrub the sides to remove mosquito eggs at least once every 5 days.
2. **Dress:** Wear long sleeves, long pants, and light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.
3. **Defend:** Properly apply an approved mosquito repellent such as DEET, Picaridin, IR3535, or Oil of Lemon-Eucalyptus.
4. **Dusk and Dawn:** Avoid activity during those times when mosquitoes are most active.

Please remember that the first line, and the best defense, against mosquitoes is you and your action in and around your home or business. Standing water is the culprit – eliminate any source of standing water! Work with your neighbors or adjoining property owners to eliminate standing water sources used by mosquitoes to breed.

If you feel sick:

- Talk to your doctor or nurse if you feel seriously ill, especially if you have a fever and have traveled to a country with locally occurring Dengue Fever or other mosquito-borne diseases.
- Consult with your doctor about the use of acetaminophen to treat fever and pain.
- Get lots of rest, and drink plenty of liquids.
- Avoid spreading the disease by preventing more mosquito bites.

For further information, please contact the Mosquito Control and Surveillance Program of the Division of Environmental Health at 735-7221.


LINDA DENORCEY UNPINGCO
 Director